

# WEEKLY NEWS

March 24-31, 2024

## Organ Transplant Data Management



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## UNEP Launched Food Waste Index Report 2024



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## HIGHLIGHTS

- IRENA
- India Gaming Report 2024
- Mumps in Kerala

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# Karnataka Government Rejects Goa-Tamnar Power Project

## ● Why in News?

- ⇒ The Karnataka government's rejection of the proposed Goa-Tamnar power project has
- ⇒ garnered attention for its significant environmental and conservation implications.

## Government's Decision

- ⇒ Minister for Forest, Ecology, and Environment Eshwar Khandre has taken a decisive stance against the project.
- ⇒ The government has rejected the proposal to divert forest land for power lines, indicating a commitment to environmental conservation.
- ⇒ Notices have been issued to officials who advocated for the forest land diversion, with explanations being sought for their stance.

## ● Project Details

- ⇒ The proposed Goa-Tamnar power project aimed to establish a 400 kV D/C Quad Transmission Line.
- ⇒ Project authorities sought the diversion of approximately 174.652 hectares of forest land across Karnataka, impacting areas such as **Dharwad, Haliyal, Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary, and Belagavi division.**
- ⇒ The transmission line was intended to connect Dharwad to Goa, with a significant portion passing through Karnataka forests, including a stretch through the **Anshi-Dandeli tiger reserve.**

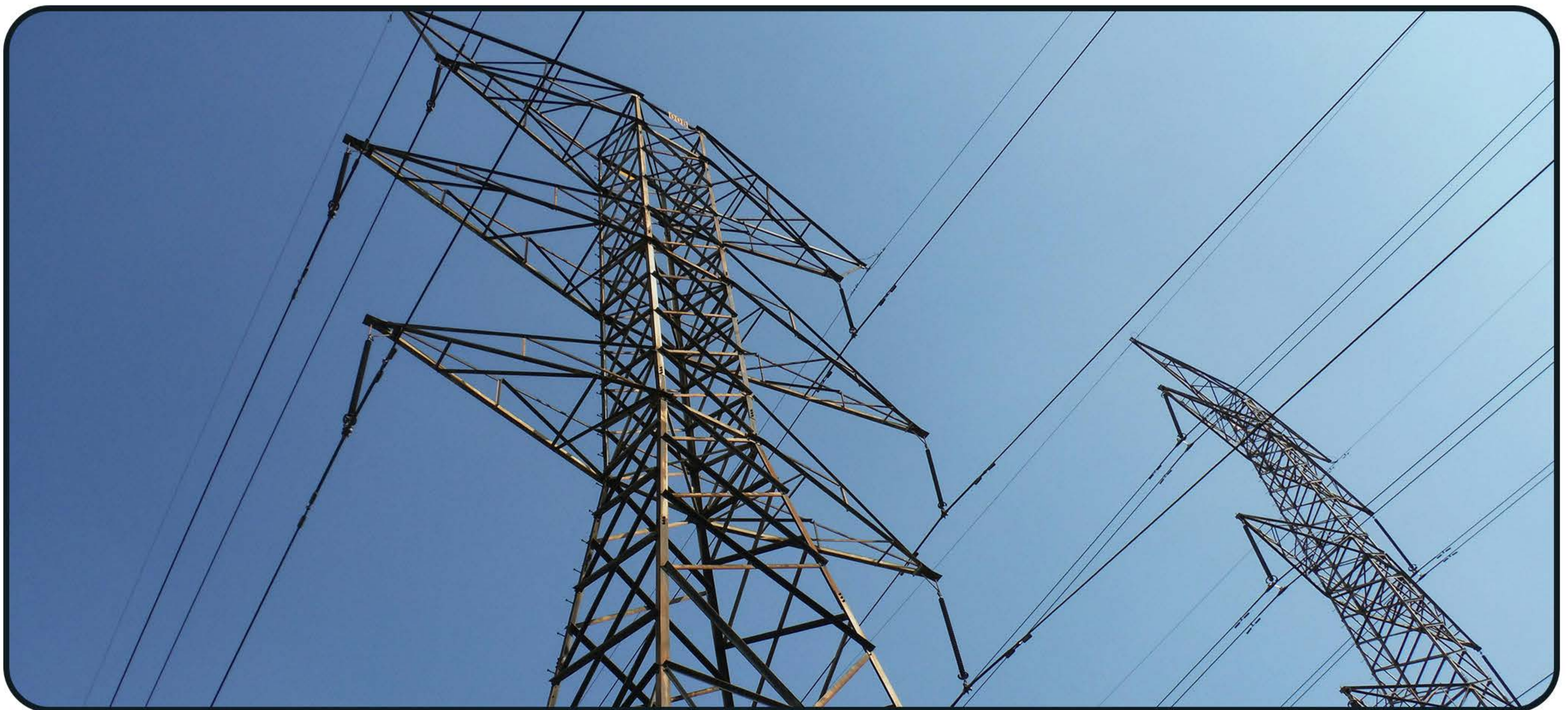


● **Environmental Concerns**

- ➔ The rejection of the project by the Deputy Conservator of Forests of Belagavi division underscores concerns about its **impact on the biodiversity of the Western Ghats.**
- ➔ Officials expressed apprehensions regarding the **potential damage to rare and endangered species**, as well as the fragmentation of ecosystems in the region.
- ➔ An estimated 35% of nearly 73,000 trees were projected to be felled for the project, raising alarm about **habitat loss and ecosystem disruption.**

● **Public Reaction**

- ➔ Wildlife conservationist Giridhar Kulkarni has lauded the government's decision as positive and bold.
- ➔ Concerns have been raised about the adverse consequences of removing native vegetation for the project, including forest degradation and human-animal conflicts.



# Hong Kong's New National Security Law

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ Hong Kong's new national security law, also known as **Article 23**, came into effect, imposing **tough penalties for various crimes, including treason and insurrection.**
- ➔ The law was swiftly passed by Hong Kong's legislature, which is currently without opposition.

## ● Key Points

- ➔ The law targets five categories of national security crimes and was passed with immediate effect.
- ➔ Penalties under the law include life imprisonment for offenses such as treason and insurrection.
- ➔ **The United States, European Union, Japan, and Britain have criticized the law, expressing concerns about its potential impact on rights and freedoms in Hong Kong.**
- ➔ U.K. Foreign Minister David Cameron warned that the law **could further damage the rights and freedoms of people in Hong Kong.**
- ➔ U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken expressed deep concern that the law could be used to **undermine rights and curb dissent, potentially harming Hong Kong's reputation as an international finance hub.**
- ➔ Hong Kong leader John Lee described the passage of the law as a "historic moment" and emphasized its necessity in preventing violence, referring to the pro-democracy protests in 2019.
- ➔ Nearly 300 people have been arrested under the security law since its enactment in 2020.



# ***Vote-From-Home Facility For Senior Citizens And Persons With Disabilities***

## ● ***Why in News?***

- ➔ The Election Commission has extended the "vote-from-home" facility to senior citizens aged 85 and above and persons with disabilities for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.
- ➔ This initiative aims to increase accessibility and participation in the electoral process for a significant portion of the population.

## ● ***Eligibility and Implementation***

- ➔ The facility is extended to **senior citizens aged 85 and above and persons with disabilities** with a benchmark disability of **not less than 40%**.
- ➔ Those opting for the vote-from-home facility will **not be eligible to vote directly at the polling station on polling day**.
- ➔ The initiative is particularly beneficial during the summer heat and is expected to enhance inclusivity in the electoral process.

## ● ***Previous Trials and Extension***

- ➔ The vote-from-home facility was previously tested during Assembly elections for select groups, including people with disabilities, senior citizens, and those affected by COVID-19.
- ➔ The upper age limit for elderly voters has been increased from 80 to 85 years by the Election Commission.
- ➔ Additionally, the postal ballot option is extended to media personnel covering polling day activities, essential service providers, and service voters.



## ● Procedure for Availing the Facility

- ➔ Eligible voters need to fill Form 12D, informing the Assistant Returning Officer (ARO) about their inability to visit the polling station.
- ➔ The form can be downloaded online or collected from the representative district officer's office.
- ➔ Two polling officials, accompanied by a videographer and security personnel, will visit the elector's home to oversee the postal ballot voting process.
- ➔ Electors will receive intimation about the visit via SMS or post, and the home voting option will be attempted twice.

## ● Challenges

- ➔ **Logistical challenges** include coordinating requests, scheduling visits, and ensuring adequate resources for the process.
- ➔ **Awareness generation among voters and polling officers** is crucial to attune the facilities to people's needs.
- ➔ Dr. Satendra Singh highlights the **need for online submission of forms** for people with disabilities and logistical preparedness to fulfill the task.

## ● Way Forward

- ➔ The Election Commission has launched a **Voter's Guide** to provide procedural details and provisions for **persons with disabilities and senior citizens**.
- ➔ Continuous efforts are needed to **address logistical challenges** and ensure effective implementation of the vote-from-home facility.



# Sebi Halts Inflows In Overseas ETFs

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has directed mutual fund houses to halt accepting inflows in schemes investing in overseas exchange-traded funds (ETFs) from April 1, 2024.
- ➔ This directive comes as the inflows in these overseas ETFs have nearly reached the mandated investment limit of \$1 billion.

## ● Sebi's Direction to Mutual Funds

- ➔ Sebi has instructed asset management companies (AMCs) to cease accepting funds in mutual fund plans investing in overseas ETFs due to the proximity to the \$1 billion investment limit.
- ➔ Mutual funds are directed to halt fresh inflows in such schemes starting April 1, 2024.

## ● Overall Limit for Mutual Funds in Overseas ETFs

- ➔ Currently, there is an overall cap of \$7 billion set by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for fund houses to invest in overseas stocks or mutual funds.
- ➔ Mutual funds are allowed to invest up to \$1 billion in overseas exchange-traded funds.
- ➔ The mutual fund industry has been urging RBI to increase the overseas investment limit from \$7 billion.

## ● RBI's Perspective on Overseas Investment Limit

- ➔ RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das stated that the decision to revisit the overseas investment limit by mutual funds will be made when the rupee stabilizes on a durable basis.



## ● **Understanding Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs)**

- ➔ ETFs are **marketable securities** that track an index, commodity, bonds, or a basket of assets similar to an index fund.
- ➔ Unlike regular mutual funds, ETFs trade like **common stocks on a stock exchange, with their price changing throughout the day.**
- ➔ ETFs offer **higher daily liquidity, lower fees, and are more tax-efficient** compared to mutual fund schemes.
- ➔ There are mainly five types of ETFs: **Equity ETFs, Bonds ETFs, Commodity ETFs, International ETFs, and Sectoral/Thematic ETFs.**





# Pakistan Launches Bid For UN Security Council Seat

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ Pakistan has formally launched its bid for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the two-year term from 2025 to 2026.
- ➔ The announcement was made by Pakistan's Representative Permanent to the UN, Ambassador Munir Akram, during a reception at the UN on Pakistan Day celebrations.

## ● Significance

- ➔ Pakistan's bid reflects its commitment to **contribute meaningfully to the UNSC's mandate for international peace and security.**
- ➔ The country seeks to play a more active role on the global stage by participating in crucial decision-making processes regarding **peacekeeping operations, conflict resolution, and international security matters.**
- ➔ By vying for a seat on the UNSC, Pakistan aims to **elevate its diplomatic profile and enhance its influence within the international community.**

## ● Challenges

- ➔ Pakistan faces **financial constraints as a cash-strapped nation**, which may hinder its ability to effectively campaign for the seat and engage in diplomatic efforts to secure support.
- ➔ Competition from **other countries also seeking non-permanent seats on the UNSC** poses a challenge for Pakistan's candidacy.



● **Way Forward**

- ➡ Pakistan will need to engage in **robust diplomatic efforts to garner support** from member states for its bid.
- ➡ Highlighting its track record of contributions to global peacekeeping efforts and conflict resolution to **showcase its suitability for the UNSC seat**.
- ➡ **Continued engagement with key stakeholders** within the UN to secure votes and build alliances in support of its candidacy.



# Revival Of Coral Reefs

## ● Why in News?

- ⇒ Climate change identified as the most pressing environmental issue.
- ⇒ Global warming and other factors contributing to the destruction of coral reefs, such as deforestation.

## ● Significance

- ⇒ Coral reefs play a vital role in marine ecosystems, providing **habitat for various marine organisms**.
- ⇒ Destruction of coral reefs due to global warming and ocean acidification has far-reaching consequences, **including loss of biodiversity and coastal protection**.
- ⇒ Efforts to mitigate coral reef degradation are essential for preserving marine ecosystems and coastal communities.

## ● Challenges

- ⇒ **Rising sea temperatures** leading to coral bleaching and death.
- ⇒ **Ocean acidification** reducing the availability of calcium minerals necessary for coral growth.
- ⇒ **Destruction of coral reefs** threatening coastal communities dependent on them for livelihoods and protection from storms.

## ● Way Forward

- ⇒ Scientists exploring innovative approaches to reef restoration, such as using sound to attract coral larvae and **promote settlement on degraded reefs**.
- ⇒ Need for further research and testing to determine the **effectiveness of sound-based reef restoration techniques**.
- ⇒ Importance of **addressing root causes of coral reef degradation**, including reducing carbon emissions and promoting sustainable land and ocean management practices.



# Organ Transplant Data Management

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ The Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry expressed concern over some States' failure to compile essential data of living and deceased donors for the organ transplantation program.
- ➔ An advisory was issued to all States regarding the importance of compiling and maintaining accurate data to monitor the implementation of the program and prevent commercial dealings in organs.

## ● About NOTTO

- ➔ The National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO) was established to provide an efficient and organized system for organ procurement and distribution in the country.
- ➔ It maintains a national registry of donors and recipients of organs and tissues, ensuring transparency and accountability in the transplantation process.

## ● Challenges

- ➔ Incomplete or missing data from some States hinder the effective monitoring of the organ transplantation program and may lead to unethical practices such as commercial dealings in organs.
- ➔ Lack of a system for collecting living donor data in some States poses a challenge to maintaining a comprehensive registry.

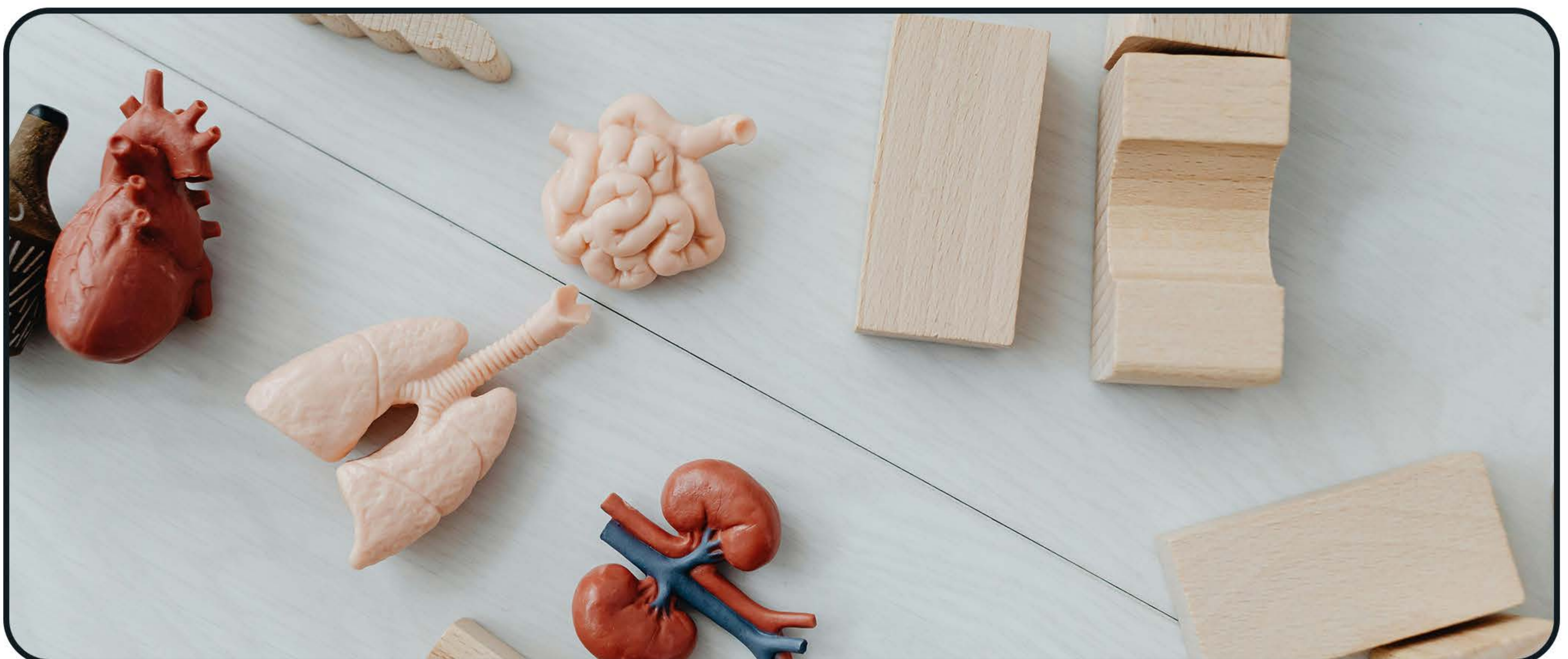


## ● **Way Forward**

- ➔ **Linking Hospitals with NOTTO Portal:** State Health Secretaries directed to ensure all licensed transplant hospitals connect with NOTTO web portal.
- ➔ **Patient Registration and Updates:** Hospitals mandated to register transplant patients and regularly update their status on NOTTO portal.
- ➔ **Data Compilation and Verification:** Regular compilation, verification, and submission of offline reports on deceased and living donors crucial for data accuracy.
- ➔ **Role of State Appropriate Authority:** State Appropriate Authority, empowered by THOTA 1994, tasked with ensuring hospital compliance with data provision.
- ➔ **Non-Compliance Handling:** Non-compliance addressed under THOTA 1994, highlighting the importance of adhering to regulations.

## ● **Data Highlights (2022)**

- ➔ **Total organs transplanted:** 16,041
- ➔ **Most transplanted organs:** Kidneys and livers
- ➔ **Top performing city:** Delhi with 3,818 organ transplants



# India-Pakistan Trade Ties

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ Pakistan's newly appointed Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar stated that Pakistan will "seriously examine" the possibility of restarting trade with India.
- ➔ External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar criticized Pakistan for its support to terrorism, emphasizing the need to address this issue in any future talks.

## ● Significance

- ➔ Trade between India and Pakistan was halted in 2019 following tensions arising from incidents like the **Pulwama bombing** and **India's Article 370** moves in Jammu and Kashmir.
- ➔ The closure of trade had adverse effects on businessmen and transporters at the Attari-Wagah land border.

## ● Challenges

- ➔ **Trade Measures:** Both countries have taken measures against each other, including withdrawal of Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status by India and suspension of direct trade ties by Pakistan.
- ➔ **Diplomatic Tensions:** There are lingering diplomatic tensions and unresolved issues, such as terrorism and territorial disputes.

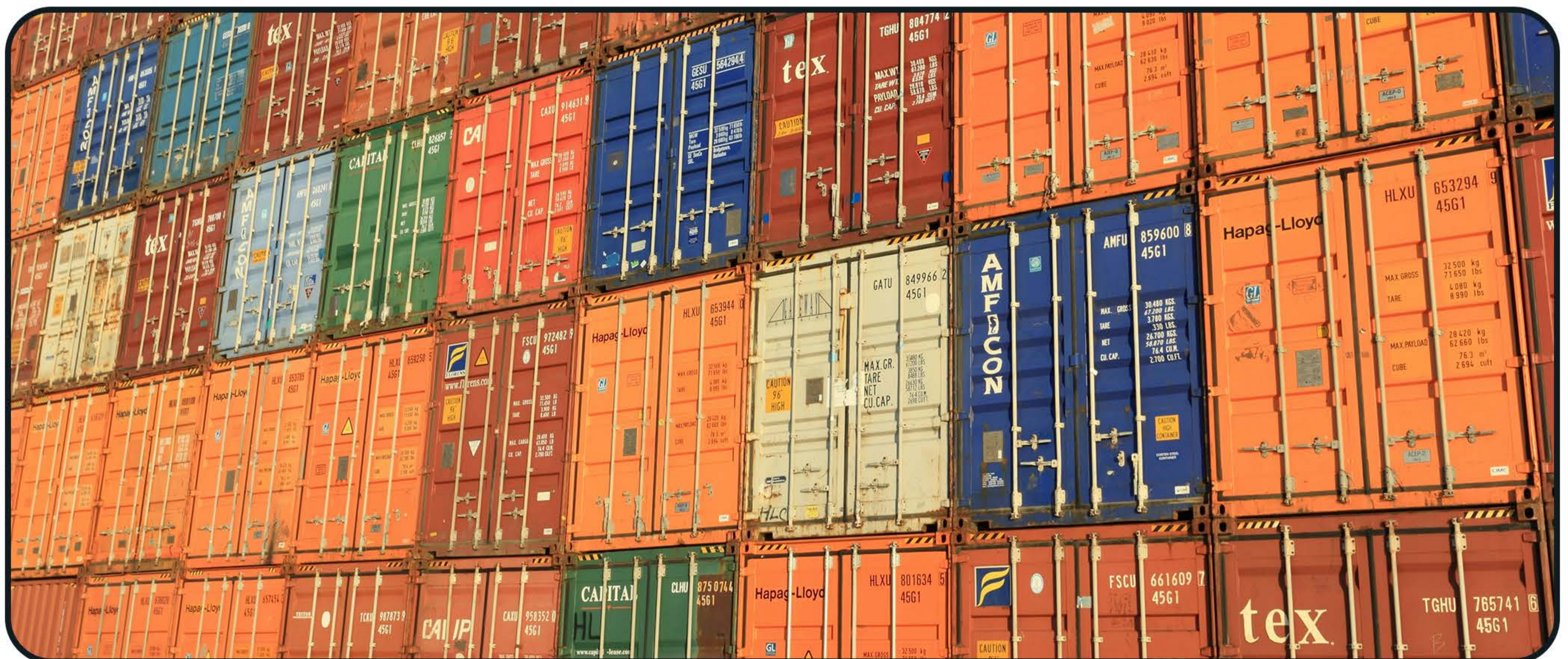


● **How can India benefit from this?**

- ➔ **Potential Market Expansion:** Resuming trade with Pakistan can open up new markets and opportunities for Indian businesses, particularly in sectors like agriculture, textiles, and pharmaceuticals.
- ➔ **Regional Stability Enhancement:** Improved economic ties can contribute to regional stability and reduce tensions between the two countries.

● **Way Forward**

- ➔ **Constructive Dialogue Needed:** Both countries should engage in constructive dialogue to address underlying issues and build mutual trust.
- ➔ **Confidence-Building Measures:** Confidence-building measures, such as resuming people-to-people contacts and cultural exchanges, can help foster better relations.
- ➔ **Assessment of Pakistan's Commitment:** India should carefully assess Pakistan's commitment to combating terrorism and ensuring a conducive environment for bilateral trade before making any concrete decisions.



# ***New Rules On Captive Elephant Transfer: Liberalizing Regulations***

## ● **Why in News?**

- ➔ The Centre has notified new rules called the **Captive Elephant (Transfer or Transport) Rules, 2024**, liberalizing conditions for the transfer of elephants within or between States.

## ● **Significance**

- ➔ The rules relax conditions for transferring captive elephants, previously governed by strict regulations under the **Wildlife Protection Act**.
- ➔ Captive elephants play historical roles in **forest management, timber transport, and religious practices**, making their transfer subject to specific regulations.

## ● **Challenges**

- ➔ Previous laws prohibited commercial transactions involving captive elephants, but an amendment in 2021 broadened the scope, potentially **accelerating trafficking and illegal commercial activities**.
- ➔ Concerns exist regarding the laxity of regulations, particularly with the establishment of private zoos hosting a large number of elephants, **raising questions about the source and welfare of the animals**.





## ● **Details of Updated Rules**

- ➔ The rules allow for the transfer of elephants when the current owner is unable to maintain them or when deemed necessary by the Chief Wildlife Warden for better upkeep.
- ➔ Before transfer within a state, the elephant's health must be certified by a veterinarian, and suitability of habitats must be assessed by the Deputy Conservator of Forests.
- ➔ Transfers involving movement across state borders require registering the elephant's genetic profile with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- ➔ Previously required permissions from Chief Wildlife Wardens of all states en route for road transportation have been replaced with permissions from originating and recipient states only.

## ● **Way Forward**

- ➔ While the Wildlife Protection Act aims to curb trafficking of wild animals, concerns persist regarding **lax enforcement and loopholes** in regulations concerning captive elephants.
- ➔ **Continuous monitoring and enforcement of the updated rules are essential** to ensure the welfare and conservation of captive elephants.



# Mumps in Kerala

## ● Why in News?

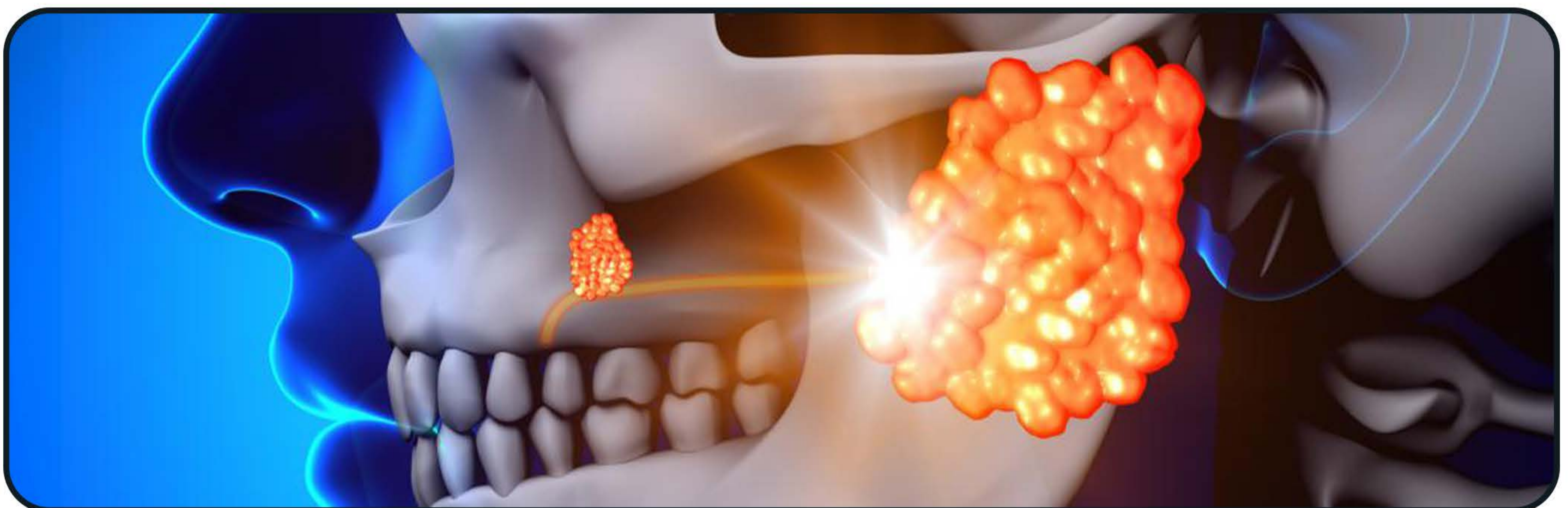
- ➔ Mumps outbreak in Kerala and other states has raised concerns among public health experts.
- ➔ Surge in cases reported since November 2023, with major outbreaks in Malappuram, Kozhikode, Palakkad, and Thrissur districts.
- ➔ Total cases reached 15,637 by March 22, with 6,675 cases reported in the current month alone.

## ● Significance

- ➔ Mumps, though traditionally affecting children, is now spreading rapidly among unimmunized individuals, leading to community outbreaks.
- ➔ Complications of mumps, including meningoencephalitis, pancreatitis, and reproductive issues, pose serious health risks.
- ➔ Lack of inclusion in the national immunization schedule has contributed to the outbreak's severity.

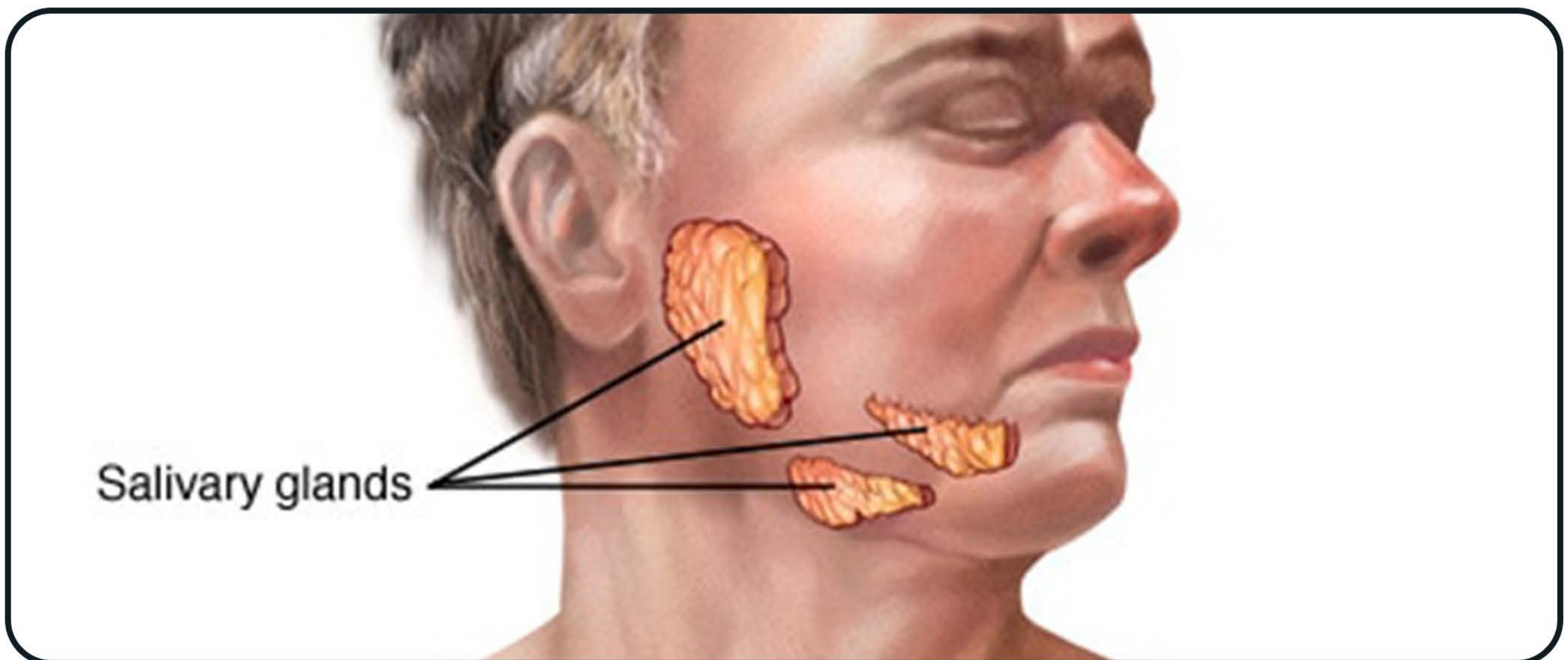
## ● Challenges

- ➔ **Documentation Gap:** There is limited documentation and understanding regarding the long-term morbidity profile of mumps, especially its effects on reproductive organs.
- ➔ **Public Awareness Deficiency:** There is inadequate public awareness about the disease and the significance of implementing isolation measures to prevent its spread.
- ➔ **School Outbreaks Exacerbation:** School-based outbreaks are worsened by instances of premature return to school before completing the recommended isolation period for individuals diagnosed with mumps.



## ● **Way Forward**

- ➔ **Public Awareness and Isolation:** Stress the importance of public awareness campaigns and isolation measures to minimize disease spread.
- ➔ **Enhanced Immunization Coverage:** Focus on improving immunization coverage, particularly targeting unimmunized children and adolescents.
- ➔ **Integration with Existing Efforts:** Integrate mumps vaccination strategies with ongoing measles elimination and rubella control initiatives.
- ➔ **Advocacy for MMR Vaccine Inclusion:** Advocate for including the MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) vaccine in the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) to bolster protection against mumps.
- ➔ **Replacement of MR Vaccine with MMR Vaccine:** Propose replacing the MR (Measles, Rubella) vaccine with the MMR vaccine in UIP to combat mumps resurgence and prevent future outbreaks effectively.



# India's Bhutan Visit

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Bhutan sparked discussions regarding its significance and outcomes.

## ● Significance

- ➔ **Symbolic Visit with Strategic Undertones:** The visit symbolized India's commitment to Bhutan's development, exemplified by doubling support for Bhutan's Five Year Plan.
- ➔ **Highlighting Infrastructure Collaboration:** During the visit, India's role in Bhutan's infrastructure projects like the Gelephu Mindfulness City was emphasized, along with bilateral cooperation in key sectors such as road, rail, and energy exchanges, showcasing mutual developmental efforts.
- ➔ **Reinforcing Stance on Regional Dynamics:** The visit aimed to reaffirm India's stance on Bhutan's engagement with China, indicating India's active participation in Bhutan's strategic and economic matters amidst regional complexities and boundary talks with China, underscoring India's readiness to support Bhutan.

## ● Challenges

- ➔ **China-Bhutan Boundary Talks:** Negotiations pose a potential threat to India's strategic interests, particularly concerning the Siliguri Corridor and connectivity projects in Arunachal Pradesh, as territorial concessions may undermine India's security posture in sensitive regions.
- ➔ **Impact on India-Bhutan Relations:** Bhutan's cautious approach to India's border connectivity projects, possibly influenced by ongoing discussions with China, poses diplomatic challenges for India. Recent reports suggest Bhutan's reluctance to proceed with certain projects until boundary negotiations with China are resolved.



● **Way Forward**

- ➡ **Strengthening Unity:** Both India and Bhutan need to bolster their united front to tackle internal economic and social challenges and counter external pressures, particularly from China.
- ➡ **Enhanced Cooperation:** Improved collaboration and coordination between India and Bhutan are essential to uphold the enduring nature of their relationship amidst shifting regional dynamics and complexities.



# India's Falling Fertility Rate

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ A new study published in The Lancet predicts that India's total fertility rate (TFR) will fall to 1.29 by 2050, far below the replacement rate of 2.1.
- ➔ This decline in fertility rate has significant implications for India's demographic structure and future population dynamics.

## ● Factors Behind Falling Fertility Rate

- ➔ India's post-Independence population-control efforts have contributed to the decline in fertility rates.
- ➔ Increased female literacy and workforce participation have led to women having fewer children and delaying childbirth.
- ➔ Changing economic dynamics, where parents perceive fewer benefits from having children, influence decisions regarding family size.

## ● Long-term Consequences

- ➔ The share of elderly individuals in the population is expected to increase sharply due to declining fertility rates.
- ➔ Challenges such as labor force shortages and gender imbalances may arise, necessitating policy interventions to address these issues.



● **Worldwide Trends**

- ➡ The decline in fertility rates is a global phenomenon, with researchers predicting that 76% of countries will be below replacement level by 2050 and 97% by 2100.
- ➡ Ethical and effective immigration policies may be necessary to offset population decline in countries with low fertility rates.

● **Comparison of India's Total Fertility Rate Over Time**

Year	Total Fertility Rate (TFR)
1950	6.18
1980	4.60
2021	1.91
2050 (Projected)	1.29



# Pakistan's Basmati Seed 'Piracy'

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ Illegal cultivation of Indian Agricultural Research Institute's (IARI) improved basmati rice varieties in Pakistan has been flagged by scientists and exporters.
- ➔ The issue gained attention after promotional YouTube videos featuring IARI varieties were observed in Pakistani regions like Multan, Bahawalnagar, and Hafizabad.

## ● India's Basmati Exports

- ➔ Despite a decline in overall merchandise exports, India's basmati exports have surged, with a 20.2% increase in dollar value and a 12.3% increase in quantity terms.
- ➔ Basmati shipments are projected to reach almost 50 lakh tonnes, valued at \$5.5 billion, making it an all-time high.

## ● Threat from Pakistan

- ➔ The 'threat' stems from alleged seed piracy and unlawful cultivation of IARI's high-yielding basmati varieties in Pakistan.
- ➔ IARI varieties, known as **Pusa Basmati (PB)**, account for nearly 89% of India's basmati exports, making their illegal cultivation in Pakistan a significant concern.





**IARI-Bred Varieties and Special Features**

- ➔ IARI's improved basmati varieties have **higher yields and shorter maturity periods** compared to traditional basmati varieties.
- ➔ Varieties like **PB-1121** and **PB-1509** have garnered popularity for their quality and yield potential.

**Concerns for India**

- ➔ While Pakistan's basmati exports are relatively low compared to India's, there are concerns about **potential market competition and violation of intellectual property rights (IPR)**.
- ➔ Pakistan's adoption of IARI basmati varieties and parboiling technology could pose challenges for India's market leadership.

**Action Plan for India**

- ➔ India has legal frameworks like the **Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act** and the **Seeds Act** to protect IARI-bred varieties.
- ➔ India can raise concerns about IPR violations in relevant bilateral forums and at the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

**Comparison of India and Pakistan's Basmati Exports**

Country	Basmati Exports (FY 2022-23)	Basmati Varieties
India	Almost 50 lakh tonnes	Pusa Basmati (PB)
Pakistan	5.95 lakh tonnes	Super Basmati

**TABLE 1:**

**INDIA'S RICE EXPORTS**

(Quantity in lakh tonnes; Value in \$million)

	NON-BASMATI		BASMATI	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
2013-14	71.48	2925.13	37.54	4864.89
2014-15	82.26	3319.81	37.02	4518.25
2015-16	63.74	2307.72	40.45	3477.35
2016-17	68.13	2553.79	40.00	3222.35
2017-18	86.33	3558.11	40.52	4165
2018-19	75.34	2999.51	44.15	4712.62
2019-20	50.36	2024.66	44.55	4371.93
2020-21	130.88	4796.02	46.32	4018.65
2021-22	172.61	6123.94	39.48	3540.22
2022-23	177.87	6355.75	45.61	4787.5
2022-23*	145.66	5165.16	36.56	3815.92
2023-24*	91.27	3681.19	41.05	4586.46



Note: Figures are for April-March; \*April-January, Source: Department of Commerce.

**TABLE 2:**

**AREA PLANTED UNDER DIFFERENT BASMATI VARIETIES IN 2023 KHARIF SEASON** (In thousand hectares)

	PB-1121, PB-1718, PB-1885	PB-1509, PB-1692, PB-1847	PB-1, PB-6	Traditional varieties*	Total Area**
Punjab	469.64	198.61	144.34	-	812.39
Haryana	478.15	196.44	99.95	13.51	787.6
Uttar Pradesh	25.68	249.79	6.27	-	461.74
Jammu & Kashmir	4.76	-	-	41.85	46.61
Uttarakhand	12.72	5.37	-	1.23	19.35
Himachal Pradesh	-	6.37	-	1.25	7.62
<b>Total</b>	<b>990.95</b>	<b>656.58</b>	<b>250.56</b>	<b>57.84</b>	<b>2135.31</b>

Note: \*CSR-30, HBC-19 and Basmati-370; \*\*Includes Sharbati and Sugandha. Source: Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority.



# CII Releases "Unicorn 2.0: Adding the Next Trillion" Report

## ● Why in News?

➔ Assessment of India's unicorn and startup ecosystem (Unicorn 1.0) and a vision for its future (Unicorn 2.0).

## ● Impact of Unicorn 1.0 (2010-23):

➔ **Economy:** Contribution of 10-15% to GDP growth with emergence of 100+ unicorns, ranking India third globally and establishment of approximately 1 lakh startups.

➔ **Inclusivity and sustainability:** 20-25% new employment creation, rise of 50 million fintech-powered MSMEs, India's 40th rank in global innovation index.

➔ **Democratizing consumption:** 30-40% lower cost of education and healthcare, improved e-commerce reach.

## ● Unicorn 2.0 (2024-35):

➔ Potential contribution of \$1 trillion to GDP by 2030.

➔ Democratization of digital services.

➔ Emergence of globally leading startups and innovation-led companies.

➔ Reduction in corporate governance lapses.

➔ Broadening of the investor ecosystem.



● **Recommendations for Unicorn 2.0:**

- ➔ **Capital:** Involvement of retail investors and public sector institutions in funding to boost capital.
- ➔ **Governance:** Implementation of defined guidelines and corporate governance framework to ensure effective governance.
- ➔ **Regulation:** Establishment of a supportive tax environment to encourage regulation.
- ➔ **Innovation:** Promotion of startups to invest in academic research and monetize intellectual property to foster innovation.
- ➔ **Talent:** Creation of a deeper talent pool through apprenticeship-based certification/courses to enhance talent.

● **Key Stakeholders behind Growth of India's Startups**

- ➔ **Broadening Investor Landscape:** Offering diverse investment avenues and instruments.
- ➔ **Widening Founder Profile:** Increasing representation of women, serial entrepreneurs, and non-traditional founders.
- ➔ **Strengthening Government Support:** Expanding digital public infrastructure to enhance digital engagement.



# ***‘Enabling a Circular Economy in India’s Solar Industry: Assessing the Solar Waste Quantum’ Report***

## ● **Why in News?**

- ➔ The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) and the Council on Energy, Environment, and Water (CEEW) have collaborated on a report under the NITI Aayog Action Plan for Circular Economy (CE), focusing on solar panel waste management.
- ➔ NITI Aayog has finalized 10 sectoral CE action plans to be implemented by relevant ministries and departments.

## ● **Solar Waste Management Need**

- ➔ India's installed solar capacity has reached 66.7 GW in FY23, generating about 100 kilotonnes (kt) of waste, projected to increase to 600 kt by 2030.
- ➔ Solar waste contains critical minerals such as silicon, copper, tellurium, and cadmium, necessitating recycling to reduce import dependency.
- ➔ Toxic metals like lead and cadmium in solar waste pose environmental and health risks, while metals like silver and silicon have high economic value.



## ● Recommendations

- ➔ Establish a comprehensive database of installed solar capacity for accurate waste mapping.
- ➔ Solar cell and module producers should **develop waste collection and storage centers** adhering to E-waste Management Rules 2022.
- ➔ Promote safe recycling and recovery practices for solar waste.
- ➔ **Collaborate between academia and industry** to accelerate innovation in module recycling technologies.



### *Initiatives for Circular Economy in India's Solar Energy Sector*

- Report on Circular Economy in Solar Panels to NITI Aayog
- Solar PV cells made part of **Electronic Waste (Management) Rules 2022**
- Solar PV recycling as priority thrust area under **Renewable Energy Research and Technology Development (RE-RTD) Programme**



# Supreme Court: Advisory Board Must Prevent Mechanistic Preventive Detention Orders

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ The Supreme Court's ruling in the case of **Nenavath Bujji etc. vs State of Telangana and others** highlights the **role of the Advisory Board (AB)** in assessing the justification of detentions under the law, particularly related to **preventive detention (PD)**.

## ● About Advisory Board (AB)

- ➔ Mandated by **Article 22(4)** of the Constitution for laws pertaining to PD.
- ➔ Comprises individuals **qualified to be appointed as judges of the High Court**.
- ➔ Parliament authorized to **establish procedures for AB's inquiries**.
- ➔ **Detention cannot exceed three months** without sufficient cause provided by the AB.

## ● Preventive Detention (PD)

- ➔ Involves **confinement without trial based on reasonable apprehension of involvement in activities threatening public order**.
- ➔ Parliament exclusively empowered to legislate on PD concerning **defense, foreign affairs, and India's security**.
- ➔ Both **Parliament and state legislatures can legislate on security-related matters**.



## ● Relevant Acts

➡ National Security Act of 1980

➡ Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act of 2019



### SC Judgments on PDs:

- **AK Gopalan vs State of Madras (1950):** SC upheld constitutional validity of PD Act of 1950.
- **Khudiram Das v. State of W.B., (1975):** SC observed that power of detention is clearly a preventive measure. It does not partake in any manner of the nature of punishment.



# ***International Labour Organization (ILO) and Institute for Human Development (IHD) releases India Employment Report 2024***

## ● **Why in News?**

➡ The report examines the **challenge of youth employment in India** and tracks changes over the past two decades.

## ● **Key Findings:**

➡ **Employment growth remained stagnant until 2019** before showing an upward trend, dominated by poor-quality employment in the informal sector.

➡ The COVID-19 pandemic has **slowed the transition of the workforce to non-farm employment**.

➡ **Women account for much of the increase in self-employment and unpaid family work.**

➡ Despite economic growth, **wages have remained low and stagnant or declining.**

➡ **Labor productivity has consistently increased alongside capital deepening**, indicating growth associated with technological progress rather than employment.





● **Challenges in Youth Employment:**

- ➔ India's youth population, which stood at 27% in 2021, is expected to decline to 23% by 2036.
- ➔ Low youth labor force participation rate, driven by educational participation of youths not in the labor force.
- ➔ Probability of employment decreases with higher education levels but increases for youths with technical education.
- ➔ Youth unemployment has nearly tripled from 5.7% in 2000 to 17.5% in 2019.

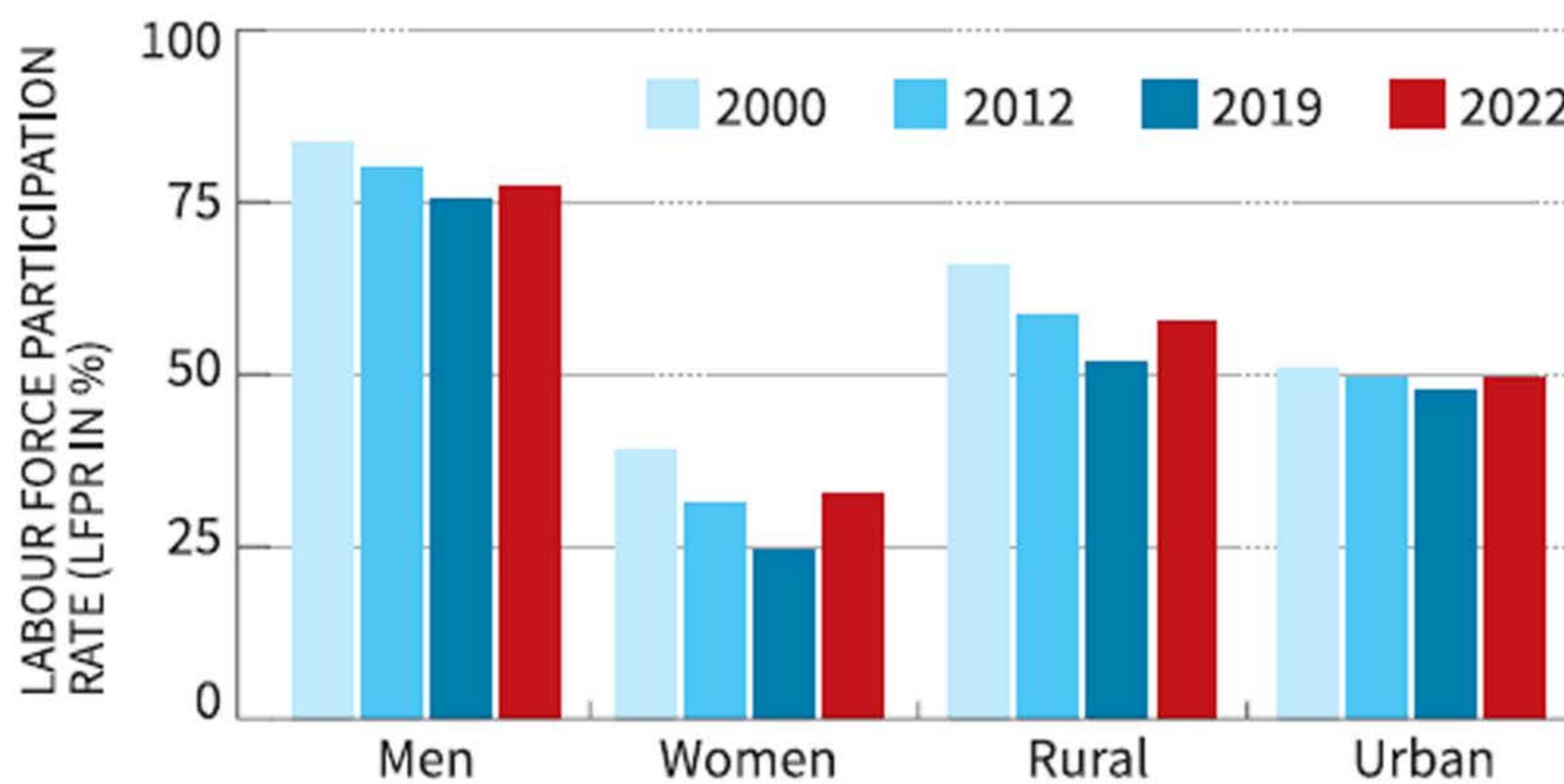


**Five Key policy areas for action:**

- Make production and growth more employment-intensive.
- Improve job quality through investing in emerging sectors, creating inclusive migration policy and ensuring basic rights.
- Overcome labour market inequalities boosting participation of women and youth.
- Make systems for skills training and active labour market policies more effective.
- Bridge knowledge deficits on labour market patterns with reliable statistics.

Employment blues

Labour participation for various sections increased slightly in 2022 (compared to 2019) but was still low vis-a-vis 2000



# India Gaming Report 2024

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ Interactive Entertainment and Innovation Council (IEIC) and WinZO released India Gaming

## ● Report 2024

- ➔ India emerges as the **largest gaming market** globally with 568 million users.
- ➔ The gaming industry in India is projected to reach **\$6 billion by 2028**.

## ● Key Findings:

- ➔ India boasts 568 million users, making it the largest gaming market globally.
- ➔ The Indian gaming market is forecasted to reach \$6 billion by 2028.
- ➔ The number of Indian gaming companies has surged from 25 in 2015 to over 1400 in 2023.
- ➔ Factors contributing to the growth include **affordable high-speed internet, increased smartphone penetration, a young population, and rising disposable income**.
- ➔ Gaming contributes to society by **reducing social isolation, fostering community building, and enhancing research, education, and skilling**.



### ● **Challenges:**

- ➔ Sustainability issues arise from "internet pollution," accounting for 3.7% of greenhouse gas emissions.
- ➔ Financial literacy gaps, regulatory complexities, and data security challenges pose obstacles to the gaming sector.

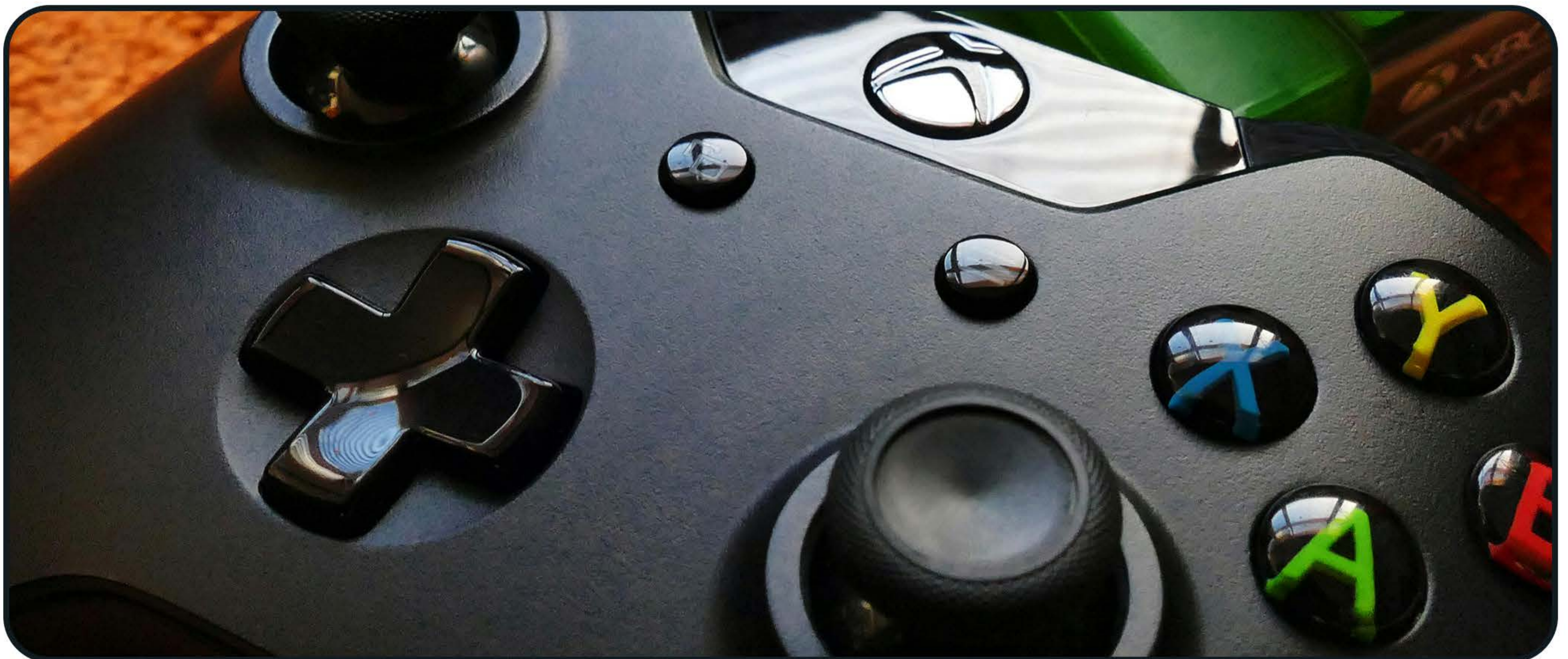
### ● **Recommendations:**

- ➔ Utilize green innovations and virtual environments for sustainable gaming.
- ➔ Establish a global gaming cluster with policy support, focusing on startups and talent development.
- ➔ Prioritize research and development for online safety and digital literacy.



### **Government Interventions for promotion of sector:**

- MeitY serves as the central agency for regulating and developing online gaming.
- Government initiatives such as **Make in India**, **Digital India**, and **Production Linked Incentive (PLI)** support the gaming sector.
- The **Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, and Comic (AVGC)** task force report, **Draft National AVGC Policy**, and **National AVGC Center of Excellence** are key initiatives.
- The gaming sector allows for **100% foreign direct investment (FDI)** through the **automatic route** within Electronic System and IT & BPM sectors.



# ASI has opted to remove 18 Centrally Protected Monuments (CPMs) from its list.

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ ASI has invoked **Section 35 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 (AMASR Act)** to delist 18 CPMs (Centrally Protected Monuments).

## Key Points:

Section 35 permits the central government to declare that any Monument of National Importance (MNI) has ceased to be of national importance.

MNIs are supposed to be conserved and maintained by ASI, representing significant historical and cultural sites.

Delisting means these monuments will **no longer be conserved, protected, and maintained by ASI.**

## Background:

The delisted monuments are among a list of 24 untraceable monuments out of 3,693 CPMs, which the Ministry of Culture submitted to the Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism, and Culture in 2022.

**Untraceable monuments** refer to sites lost due to **urbanization, encroachments, etc., with no surviving public memory.**



● **Some Delisted Monuments:**

- ➡ Kos Minar No.13 in Haryana
- ➡ Barakhamba Cemetery in Delhi
- ➡ Gunner Burkill's Tomb in Jhansi
- ➡ Telia Nala Buddhist ruins in Varanasi



**Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**

- Established in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham.
- Government agency headquartered in New Delhi.
- Responsible for archaeological research, conservation, and preservation of cultural monuments.
- Comes under the Ministry of Culture.



# UNEP Launched Food Waste Index (FWI) Report 2024

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ The report was published ahead of the **International Day of Zero Waste**, observed annually on 30 March.
- ➔ It highlights the **global issue of food waste** and its impact on sustainability and food security.

## ● Key Findings:

- ➔ Households worldwide wasted over 1 billion meals a day in 2022, despite 783 million people facing hunger and a third of humanity experiencing food insecurity.
- ➔ Food waste contributes to an estimated 8–10% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

## ● SDG Goals:

- ➔ Supports **SDG 12.3**, aiming to **reduce food losses** along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses.
- ➔ Specifically targets **SDG 12.3.1 (b)** to **halve per-capita global food waste at retail and consumer levels by 2030**, with UNEP as the custodian of FWI.



● **Challenges:**

- ➡ **Lack of robust cold chains** leads to more food waste per capita in hotter countries.
- ➡ **Insufficient data available for retail and food service sectors**, particularly in low and middle-income countries.
- ➡ **Fragmented food systems exacerbate the issue of food waste.**



**About WRAP**

- Climate action NGO founded in **2000** in the **UK**, working on climate crisis causes.
- **Recommends collaborative approach to reduce food waste.**
- Advocates for **systemic action via PPPs like Courtauld Commitment 2030.**
- Suggests **establishing roadmaps targeting waste "hotspots."**



# IRENA releases “A World Energy Transitions Outlook Brief: Tracking CoP 28 outcomes” report

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ Report tracks global progress towards energy transition commitment to triple renewables by 2030 as outlined in COP 28 of UNFCCC.

## ● Key Findings:

- ➔ **Insufficient progress:** 2023 added 473 GW additional renewables to global energy mix, with solar energy contributing 73%.
- ➔ **Geographical disparities:** Asia led renewable deployment with 20.1% growth, driven by China.
- ➔ **Progress in electrification:** Road transport shows highest potential for electrification, with new EV models, financial incentives, and improving charging infrastructure as key drivers.

## ● Challenges:

- ➔ **Rising financing costs.**
- ➔ **Supply chain issues,** including bottlenecks for some technologies and market oversupply in others.





## ● **Recommendations to Achieve Tripling Target:**

- ➔ 1. **Reforming multilateral finance mechanisms.**
- ➔ 2. **Supporting infrastructure, such as power grids and storage.**
- ➔ 3. **Implementing robust policy frameworks.**
- ➔ 4. **International cooperation for developing renewable supply chains, enhancing institutional and human capacity, and scaling up and broadening access to low-cost finance.**



### ***International Renewable Energy Agency***

#### ● **Genesis:**

- Proposal for an international agency dedicated to renewable energy was made in 1981 at the **UN Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy in Nairobi, Kenya.**

#### ● **Establishment:**

- IRENA was founded in **Bonn, Germany, in 2009** with 75 states signing the IRENA Statute at the time.

#### ● **About:**

- IRENA is a leading global **intergovernmental agency for energy transformation.**

#### ● **Functions:**

- It serves as the principal platform for **international cooperation, supports countries in their energy transitions, and provides state-of-the-art data and analyses on technology, etc.**

#### ● **Members:**

- IRENA has **168 member countries and the EU, with India also being a member.**

#### ● **Major Reports by IRENA:**

- **World Energy Transition Outlook**
- **Renewable Energy Outlook for ASEAN**
- **Renewable Energy for Agriculture**



# External Affairs Minister (EAM) of India visited Malaysia

## ● EAM Visit Objective:

- ➔ Strengthen bilateral cooperation in areas like trade, defence, culture, and education.  
Enhance the strategic partnership between India and Malaysia.

## ● India-Malaysia Bilateral Relations:

- ➔ **Establishment:** Diplomatic relations established in 1957.
- ➔ **Strategic Importance:** Malaysia is part of India's Act East policy and a key partner in ASEAN.
- ➔ **Defence Cooperation:**
  - Joint exercises: "Harimau Shakti" (Army), Samudra Lakshman Maritime Exercise (Navy), Udara Shakti (Air force).
  - Participation in Exercise MILAN.
- ➔ **Trade Relations:**
  - Signed **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement**.
  - Bilateral trade reached \$19.4 billion during 2021-22.
  - Trade settlements can be made in Indian Rupee.
  - India imports palm oil mainly from Indonesia and Malaysia.
- ➔ **Cultural Ties:**
  - Indian Cultural Centre in Kuala Lumpur offers classes in **Carnatic Vocal, Kathak dance, Yoga, and Hindi language**.
  - Renamed as **Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Indian Cultural Center (NSCBICC)** in 2015.
- ➔ **Humanitarian Assistance:** More than 1 lakh Indian nationals repatriated from Malaysia under Vande Bharat Mission during Covid-19.



# Criminalisation of Politics

## ● ADR Report's Findings:

- ➔ Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Himachal Pradesh account for 50% of MPs facing criminal charges.
- ➔ Among sitting MPs with criminal charges, 29% face serious allegations like murder, attempt to murder, and crimes against women.

## ● Understanding Criminalisation of Politics:

- ➔ **Definition:** It involves the infiltration of criminals, lawbreakers, and corrupt individuals into the political system, leveraging their influence for personal gain.

### ➔ Causes:

- Increased collaboration between political parties and criminals.
- Inadequate laws and regulations governing election processes.
- Influence of financial power in manipulating votes for nefarious purposes.

### ➔ Consequences:

- Undermines the fairness of electoral processes.
- Impairs the effectiveness of governance and the credibility of public officials.
- Corrupt practices deteriorate societal trust and harmony.

## ● Notable Supreme Court Decisions:

- ➔ **Lily Thomas Vs UOI (2013):** Members of Parliament and State Legislatures convicted of crimes carrying a minimum 2-year prison sentence are disqualified from their positions.
- ➔ **Public Interest Foundation v UOI (2018):** Mere framing of criminal charges does not warrant disqualification from legislative membership.



# Joint Report by UNEP and GlobalABC:

## ● Why in News?

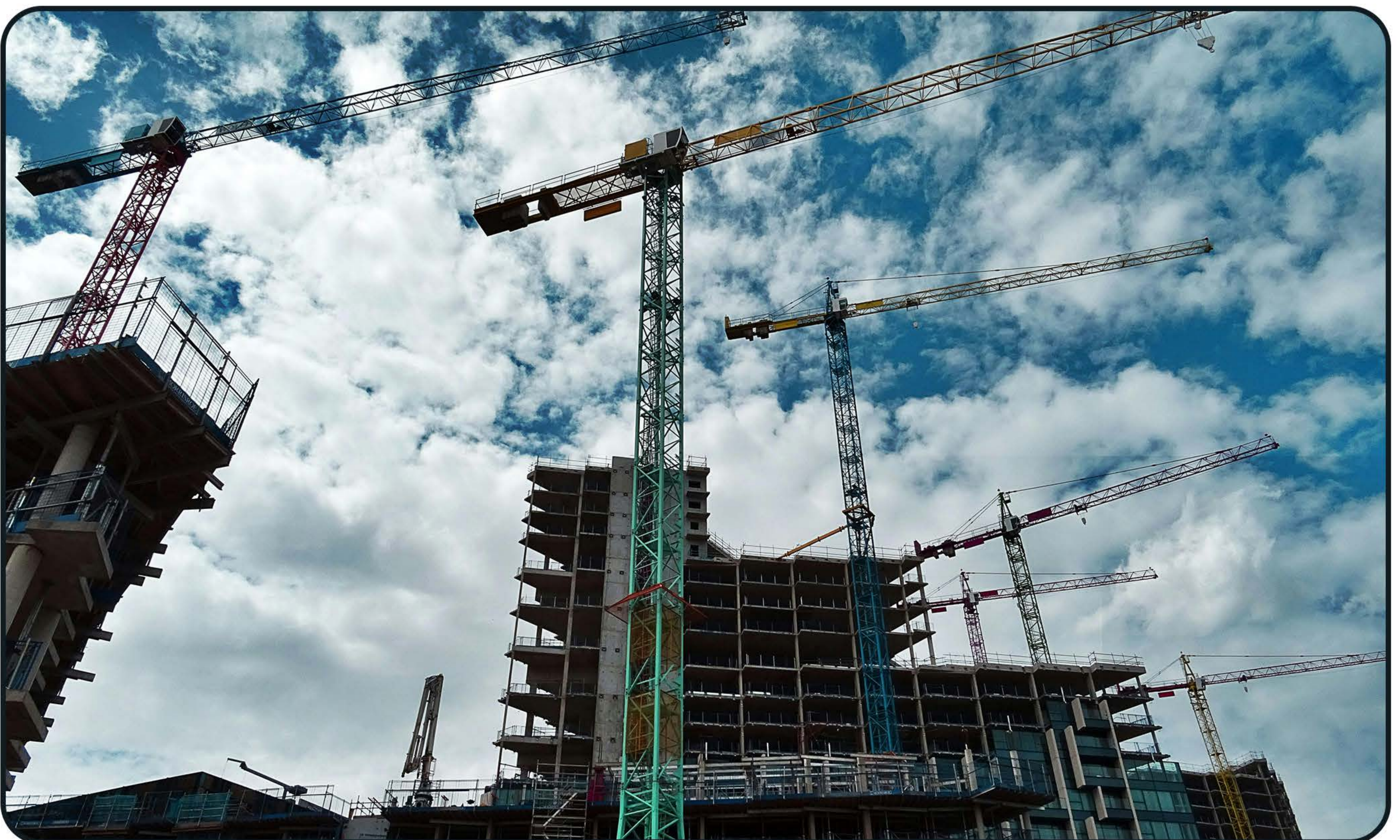
- ➔ Published jointly by **UNEP** and **Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (GlobalABC)**.
- ➔ Highlights the significant role of the Building and Construction Sector (BCS) in global greenhouse gas emissions.

## ● Key Findings:

- ➔ BCS contributes approximately **21% of global greenhouse gas emissions**.
- ➔ Buildings accounted for **34% of global energy demand** and **37% of energy and process-related carbon dioxide emissions in 2022**.
- ➔ India attributes **40% of its CO2 emissions to buildings**.

## ● Need to Decarbonize BCS:

- ➔ Aimed at limiting global warming to **1.5°C (Paris Agreement)** and achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 through reducing embodied carbon in building materials.



● **Initiatives for Sustainable BCS:**

➡ **Global:**

**Declaration de Chaillot:** Foster international cooperation to address climate challenges within the building sector.

**Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EU):** Implements zero-emission standards for new buildings by 2030.

**Buildings Breakthrough Initiative:** Aims for near-zero emission and resilient buildings by 2030.

**Clean Heat Forum (UK):** Initiative to promote clean heating solutions.

➡ **India:**

**Zero Carbon Buildings Action Plan (ZCBAP):** Nagpur launched the first city-specific plan for zero-carbon buildings.

**Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2022:** Provides for Energy Conservation and Sustainability Building Code implementation.



**About GlobalABC:**

- Established at COP21, GlobalABC is a leading global platform for stakeholders in the built environment.
- It champions a common vision for a zero-emission, efficient, and resilient buildings and construction sector.

**Challenges in Decarbonizing BCS:**

- Inadequate building practices can lead to maladaptation, resulting in increased energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.
- The ongoing construction of carbon-intensive new buildings in areas exposed to climate risks exacerbates the challenge.

**Recommendations:**

- Develop building energy codes that align with Zero-Emissions Building principles.
- Provide financial incentives to encourage greater investment in decarbonizing the buildings and construction sector.



# Brussels hosts the world's inaugural Nuclear Energy Summit

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ Summit convened by the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** and **Belgium** to advocate for nuclear energy.
- ➔ Occurred after nuclear energy's inclusion in the **Global Stocktake during COP28, 2023**.

## ● Key Points about IAEA:

- ➔ **Establishment:** Formed in 1957 as an **autonomous UN organization**.
- ➔ **Objective:** Works towards global promotion of **safe, secure, and peaceful nuclear technologies**.
- ➔ **Safeguard Mechanism:** Tasked with nuclear inspection duties under the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)** and related treaties. Utilizes the Additional Protocol mechanism to verify peaceful nuclear material usage in member states, including India.
- ➔ **Membership:** Includes 178 countries, **India among them**.
- ➔ **Key Initiative:** **Atoms4NetZero**.
- ➔ **Headquarters:** Located in **Vienna, Austria**.

## ● Relevance and Challenges of Nuclear Energy:

- ➔ Provides **clean electricity** with minimal carbon footprint, comprising about 25% of global low-carbon electricity production.
- ➔ Technological advancements, like **Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)**, enhance feasibility. SMRs are advanced reactors with up to 300 MW(e) capacity per unit.
- ➔ Offers continuous availability but faces challenges like safety concerns post-Fukushima, susceptibility to cyber-attacks, and **high upfront costs and construction delays**.



- **Participants and Significance:**

- ➔ European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen led the delegation, which included leaders from **Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, and Italy.**
- ➔ The agreement underscores the importance of regional cooperation and stability, with a focus on addressing migration challenges and enhancing energy security.

- **Broader Context:**

- ➔ Egypt's **strategic location**, bordering conflict zones like Libya and regions of ongoing conflict like the Gaza Strip, **adds significance to the partnership.**
- ➔ The EU has pursued similar agreements **with other North African countries**, such as **Libya, Tunisia, and Mauritania**, to manage irregular migration flows across the Mediterranean Sea.
- ➔ The visit and financial package reflect the EU's efforts to engage strategically with neighbouring countries **to address shared challenges and promote stability in the region.**





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